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Message Text

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46
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 A-01 OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00

PC-01 EB-07 ACDA-05 CU-02 MC-02 DHA-02 SY-05 SCCT-01

/090 W
---------- 053115
O 111335Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8604
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
DIA WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0266

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EC
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ HANDS POWER TO TRIUMVIRATE OF THE ARMED FORCES

REF: QUITO 0260

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: A MILITARY TRIUMVIRATE, COMPOSED OF THE CHIEFS OF THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES, REPLACED PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ EARLY ON THE MORNING OF JANUARY 11. THE NEW LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE THE PROGRAMS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR. PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ ISSUED A LENGTHY STATEMENT DECLARING HIS RESIGNATION TO HAVE BEEN MADE FREELY, AND THAT HE WILL RETURN TO HIS FARM AND PRIVATE LIFE. THERE ARE REPORTS OF SOME OPPOSITION TO THE NEW TRIUMVIRATE WITHIN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ARMED FORCES. EMBASSY'S INITIAL VIEW IS THAT THE CHANGE IN

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MILITARY RULERS SHOULD HAVE LITTLE IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON
GOE POLICIES TOWARD THE US OR OUR INTERESTS IN ECUADOR.
WE ASSUME QUESTION OF RECOGNITION WILL NOT ARISE.
END SUMMARY.

2. A FEW HOURS FOLLOWING A LARGE WEDDING RECEPTION FOR
THE DAUGHTER OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA ON THE EVENING
OF JAN 10, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED WORD AT 3 A.M., JAN 11,
THAT THE JOINT COMMAND WOULD ANNOUNCE SHORTLY IT HAD TAKEN
POWER. AT APPROXIMATELY 3:50 A.M. JAN 11, THE JOINT
COMMAND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE STATING IT HAD ACCEPTED THE
RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA AND HAD ASSUMED
POWER. THE COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR PEACE AND ORDER AND
COMMITTED THE NEW LEADERSHIP TO THE PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMS
OF THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING
A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AT THE END OF NEXT
YEAR.

3. QUICKLY FOLLOWING THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE JOINT
COMMAND,. PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ ISSUED A LENGTHY STATEMENT
DECLARING THAT HIS RESIGNATION HAD BEEN OFFERED FREELY FOR
THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY, REVIEWED THE EFFORTS OF HIS
GOVERNMENT, CONDEMNED THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL GROUPS OF
THE COUNTRY, AND CALLED FOR THE CONTINUED TRANSFORMATION
OF ECUADOR UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OG THE ARMED FORCES
TO A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IN ACCORD WITH THE NEEDS
AND DESIRES OF ECUADOREAN PEOPLE. HE STATED HIS INTENTION
TO RETURN TO HIS FARM AND TO PRIVATE LIFE.

4. THERE ARE PRIVATE AND RADIO REPORTS, AS YET UNCON-
FIRMED BY THE MISSION, THAT GENERAL VASCONEZ (FORMER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION WHO WAS DISMISSED YESTERDAY FROM
THE ARMED FORCES) HAS STATIONED HIMSELF IN RIOBAMBA TO
LEAD OPPOSITION TO THE NEW RULING TRIUMVIRATE.

5. THE NEW RULING MILITARY TRIUMVIRATE CONSISTS OF THE
HEADS OF THE THREE ARMED FORCES: VICE ADMIRAL ALFREDO
POVEDA BURBANO, CHIEF OF THE JOINT COMMAND AND
COMMANDER OF THE NAVY; GENERAL LUIS GUILLERMO DURAN
ARCENTALES, COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY; AND RECENTLY
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PROMOTED GENERAL LUIS LEORO FRANCO, COMMANDING GENERAL
OF THE AIR FORCE. BIO INFORMATION ON THESE
THREE MEN WAS PROVIDED WASHINGTON IN IR 6-828-0177-75
OF SEPT 11, 1975 (POVEDA); IR 6-828-0167-75 OF SEPT 9, 1975
(DURAN), AND IR 6-828-0152-75 OF AUG 11, 1975 (LEORO).

6. COMMENT: THIS ACTION CULMINATES FOUR MONTHS OF
POLITICAL RUMORS, DISSATISFACTION AND INSTABILITY SINCE

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THE ABORTIVE SEPT 1 COUP AGAINST PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ.
IT FOLLOWS A WEEK OF CRISIS INITIATED BY STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
OVER A RISE IN BUS FARES, A TRANSPORT STRIKE,
INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE, AND THREE DAYS OF DELIBERATIONS WITHIN
THE ECUADOREAN ARMED FORCES. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS
STATED ITS COMMITTMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES AND PLANS OF
THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING
EVENTUAL TRANSITION TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE
PROBLEMS THAT HAVE CONFRONTED THE RODRIGUEZ LARA GOVERN-
MENT WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

7. POVEDA IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS THE US, THE
FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, AND WESTERN STYLE DEMOCRACY.
HE IS THE MOST CAPABLE AND INTELLIGENT OF THE TRIUMVIRATE.
DURAN, WHO COMMANDS BY FAR THE MOST POWERFUL BRANCH OF
THE ARMED FORCES, IS CONSIDERED LIMITED IN ABILITY,
AUTHORITARIAN AND A STRONG PERSONALITY. HE HAS BEEN
CONSIDERED PRO-US AND CONSERVATIVE BUT RECENTLY
THERE HABE BEEN REPORTS THAT HE HAS BEEN CULTIVATING OR
CULTIVATED BY A FEW ECUADOREAN LEFTISTS. THESE REPORTS,
HOWEVER, MAY HAVE BEEN GENERATED BY HIS RIVALS WITHIN THE
ARMED FORCES. LEORO IS CONSIDERED TO BE SOMEWHAT
ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD THE US AND THE WEAKER OF THE THREE
INDIVIDUALS.

8. RIVALRY HAS EXISTED BETWEEN DURAN AND POVEDA. DURAN
HAS OPPONENTS WITHIN THE ARMY AND LEORO TOO HAS RIVALS
WITHIN THE AIR FORCE. THE FACTORS RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT
FUTURE HARMONY AND UNITY WITHIN THE TRIUMVIRATE. IF THE
REPORT ABOUT VASCONEZ IS TRUE, THERE MAY BE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS,
BUT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT SUBSTANTIAL RESISTENCE COULD
BE RALLIED WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT
RODRIGUEZ STATEMENT.
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9. THE EMBASSY'S INITIAL VIEW IS THAT THE CHANGE IN
MILITARY RULERS SHOULD HAVE LITTLE IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON
GOE POLICIES ON THE US OR OUR INTEREST IN ECUADOR.

10. ASSUMING, AS WE DO, THAT THE TRIUMVIRATE IS FIRMLY
IN CONTROL, WE ALSO ASSUME, UNLESS OTHERWISE INFORMED
BY THE DEPARTMENT, THAT THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION WILL
NOT ARISE. PLEASE ADVISE.
HEMENWAY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, REMOVAL FROM OFFICE, MILITARY GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976QUITO00266
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760010-0179
From: QUITO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760168/aaaachzf.tel
Line Count: 164
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 QUITO 260
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2004 by saccheem>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ HANDS POWER TO TRIUMVIRATE OF THE ARMED FORCES
TAGS: PINT, MILI, EC, (RODRIGUEZ LARA, GUILLERMO A)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006